

THE
SICK MAN'S EMPLOY:

Or, VIEWS of
DEATH AND ETERNITY
REALIZED.

Occasioned by a VIOLENT FIT of the STONE,
and published for the Good of those, who would
pay Attention to the Divine Call,
PREPARE TO MEET THY GOD, O ISRAEL!

By JOHN FAWCETT.

We claim acquaintance with the skies,
Upwards our spirits hourly rise,
And there our thoughts employ:
When God shall sign our grand release,
We are no strangers to the place,
The business, or the joy.

Dr. WATTS's Hor. Lyr.

DEBEMUR MORTI NOS, NOSTRAQUE.

HOR.

L O N D O N :

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THE

SICK MAN'S EMPLOY:

OF THE

DEATH AND BURIAL

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BY JOHN FAWCETT



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P R E F A C E.

*I*T was the custom of David, and the practice of Hezekiah, Jonah, and others, kings and prophets, whose writings are contained in the sacred canon of scripture, to rehearse the agonies of their distress, when they offered to heaven their songs of deliverance. They recollected their hours and days of bitterness, and the workings of their souls amidst their sharp and grievous sorrows, to make the remembrance of their salvation the sweeter, and so kindle the zeal of their gratitude to a higher flame. Is it a matter of blame to imitate such examples? Doth not the reason hold good in our age, and to all generations? Why should a Christian be any more afraid to tell the world of his afflictions, or distresses, than a Jew? Or why should he be ashamed to let them know, that, amidst those sinkings of life and nature, Christianity and the gospel were his support?

Dr. WATTS's *Miscel.* p. 171, 172. fifth Ed.

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TO THE
F L O C K

COMMITTED TO THE

AUTHOR'S CARE,

GRACE AND PEACE BE MULTIPLIED.

DEARLY BELOVED,

THE following pages are published,
primarily, for your edification and com-
fort; and with a view to excite you and
myself to a due improvement of that awful
providence to which they refer. The regard
you expressed for me under my late affliction,
in your prayers for me and tears on my ac-
count, made very deep impressions on my
mind; and served to heighten in me that ten-
der and hearty concern for your spiritual and

B

eternal

eternal welfare, which the connection subsisting between us naturally requires. I doubt not but I have been reaping the fruits of your prayers to God for me, both in the support I have enjoyed under my affliction, and in my recovery from the bed of languishing.—And has the Lord in very deed raised me up from the borders of the grave? May I be enabled to devote every hour of the life he has so graciously prolonged, to the honor of his holy name! I now address you, my dear friends, as one called back from the verge of the eternal world. And what shall I say? Even the same that I have declared unto you from the beginning, which ye have received, and in which ye stand—That your natures are depraved, and your souls lost and ruined by sin; but Jesus is an all-sufficient and everlasting Saviour. He has died for your sins, paid his blood, his life for your ransom, and ever lives to make intercession for you in heaven—That an experimental knowledge of him, and lively faith in him, are essentially necessary to salvation: even
such

such a knowledge as is influential, operative, and practical; and such a faith as *worketh by love*, and is accompanied with all the fruits of holiness in the temper and life—That the Saviour's love is sovereign, free, immense and everlasting—That his salvation is full and complete, from all sin, and all its consequences, for ever—And, that they who *have believed, should be careful to maintain good works*; and under the happy influence of the grace of God, which has appeared to all men in the blessed gospel, *deny ungodliness and worldly lusts; live soberly, righteously, and godly; have their conversation in heaven*, and continue in the daily expectation and joyful hope of the glory of God.

May the blessing of heaven attend the little piece, which I now put into your hands! I have found the devotional writings of other authors of special use to my own heart, both in time of health and sickness. Besides *Augustine's Confessions and Soliloquies, Gerhard's Meditations*, and other pieces of the same kind in the *Roman* language; the melodious

strains of Dr. *Watts*, the elevated aspirations
 of Mrs. *Rowe*, and the flowing and heart-
 warming periods of my favorite, *Hervey*,
 being rendered pretty familiar to my mind,
 I have, you will perceive, sometimes ex-
 pressed myself in their very words. Nor do
 I think it needful to make any apology for
 so doing, in a piece of this kind. Suffice it
 to say, that in what you have here before
 you, you have, for substance, the very phrases
 in which your afflicted friend expressed him-
 self, in the intervals between his fits of
 pain; as those who attended him can tes-
 tify.—I am well aware I shall be liberally
 censured for this publication, by the enemies
 of experimental and vital Christianity. But
 as I am not conscious that any ostentatious
 views have induced me to make these medi-
 tations public; and as I am persuaded that
 what I have here expressed is conformable,
 in a low and inferior degree, to the experi-
 ence of God's saints recorded in scripture;
 I shall not trouble myself much about what
 this class of readers may say of me, or of
 my

my little tract. If these reflections be but of any service to my dear hearers, or to any others, whether in town or country, to whom I have the honor to stand related in the bonds of Christian friendship, to stir up in them a spirit of devotion, promote their love and zeal, or engage them the more earnestly in the pursuit of heavenly objects, I shall be happy, though I fall under ten thousand censures from a giddy world. Most earnestly do I wish, likewise, that any hint suggested in this small publication, might be owned of God for the conviction and conversion of some poor careless sinner! Blessed Lord! hast thou not made me a fisher of men? I here cast forth my net, slender and scanty indeed, but O, let it not be wholly unsuccessful! Direct it on the right side of the ship, and let it happily draw and gather some souls to thee. For this my soul longs, more than they that watch for the morning. *Save now, O Lord, I beseech thee! O Lord, I beseech thee, send now prosperity! Speak thou*

to the heart of every reader of this little book, or all will be in vain.

I only add, my best wishes and affectionate prayers, for you, my dear charge. That, as you are now my joy, you may be *my crown of rejoicing in the day of the Lord Jesus*; that ye may stand fast in the truth, be fervent in love, lively in hope, holy and humble in conversation; that ye may be faithful unto death, and receive the crown of life, in that blessed world, to which these contemplations are designed to direct your thoughts. So prays, dearly beloved,

Your affectionate pastor,

Wainsgate, near Halifax,

June 1, 1774.

J. F.

SEC-

SECTION I.

The precariousness of health, and uncertainty of life.

IN what perils is life perpetually engaged ! The all-surrounding heaven, the vital air, are big with death. How various and numerous the diseases and the dangers, to which we are subject every moment ! *What is your life ?* that life with which stands connected whatever is enjoyed below ; What is it ? An eminent father of the Christian church, is at a loss whether to call it, *a dying life, or a living death* *. The vigor of our age falls away, like water that runneth apace ; and the blissful minutes of the prime of our years, vanish like a dream. What is health, but a fading flower ! What is life, but a *vapour, which appears for a little season, and*

* *Nescio an dicenda sit, vita mortalis, an vitalis mors.*
Aug. Confess. L. 1.

vanisheth away * ? It is but a speedy flight to eternity, a swift race to the grave, a flying cloud, a vanishing shadow, a perishing breath! Three days ago I resigned to the gloomy repository of the tomb, a lovely blooming creature, the hope of his father that begat him, and the joy of her that bare him; possessed (at least, in a fond parent's estimation) of whatever may be supposed amiable and engaging in one of his years, and less than two weeks ago, smiling in health and vigor. But fierce disease soon sapped his tender frame, and relentless death quickly snatched him from our fond embrace †.

I have

* *James iv. 14.*

† He died of the *small-pox*, aged four years and a half, after telling his father he would go to Jesus. Two days after his interment, his mournful parent endeavoured to improve the providence, in a discourse on *Luke xviii. 16.* *But Jesus called them to him and said; Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me; for of such is the kingdom of God.* A few plain verses, sung at the close of the solemnity, are here subjoined.

Lord

I have felt for my sweet babe with a sympathizing tenderness, but now I feel for myself.

I.

Lord, make me humble, meek and mild,
For such thou dost approve ;
And he that's like a little child,
Shall dwell with thee above.

II.

When Christ sojourn'd on earth below,
Young children to him came ;
Jesus receives young children now,
For he is still the same.

III.

These in his arms he meekly took,
Clasp'd them in his embrace ;
Whilst heav'nly love, in ev'ry look,
Shone on the Saviour's face.

IV.

He plac'd his dear and spotless hands
Upon their smiling brows ;
And blessings on their heads commands,
The blessings he bestows.

V.

Lord, we would give our babes to thee,
And scarcely call them ours ;
Bless their young souls, and let them be
Renew'd in all their pow'rs.

VI. And

self. One loud alarm is succeeded by a second, louder still. The stroke is sudden, as the flight of an arrow, and piercing, as the point of a dagger. *Have pity upon me, have pity upon me, O my friends, for the band of God hath touched me ! The arrows of the Almighty stick fast in me, and his hand presseth me sore. What shall I say ? He hath both spoken to me, and himself hath done it. Like a crane or a swallow, so do I chatter ; I mourn as a dove. My heart is smitten and withered like grass. O Lord, I am oppressed, undertake for me !*

VI.

And shou'dst thou call them hence by death,
 We would our charge resign ;
 For thou didst give them life and breath,
 And they are doubly thine.

SECTION II.

The necessity of constant readiness for death.

NO one, saith Seneca, hath such indulgence from the gods, as that he may promise himself to-morrow*. A certain historian mentions an eminent person, who being invited to dine the next day, answered; *I have not had a morrow for these many years*†. Methinks I hear the echo of the blessed Redeemer's most necessary and salutary admonition; *Be ye therefore ready also; for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not*‡. We know not what shall be on the morrow, therefore it is vain to boast of it. Our souls may be required this night, yea, this moment.

* *Nemo tam diu habuit faventes crastinum, ut possit sibi polliceri.* † *Ego a multis annis crastinum non habui.*

‡ *Luke xii. 40.*

- “ Dangers stand thick thro’ all the ground
 “ To push us to the tomb ;
 “ And fierce diseases wait around
 “ To hurry mortals home.”

How necessary is it to be in a prepared state for death ! This should be our governing, our prevailing concern. *O, that we were wise, that we understood this*, duly and practically to *consider our latter end* ! When the blast of sickness smites, or ghastly death shews his pale visage, and brandishes his dart ; how miserable must be our condition, without an interest, and a steady confidence, in the all-glorious Redeemer ! When we are seized with excruciating pain, or overwhelmed with pining sickness, we are as unfit to attend to the important concerns of our immortal souls, and to *prepare to meet our God*, as we are to run a race, or to grind at a mill *. Our blessed Lord assures us, that

* Of all the marks of infatuation I know amongst men, there can be none equal to that of trusting to a death-bed repentance. Dr. *Boyle*.

without

without a spiritual change of heart, called the new-birth, we can neither see nor enter into the kingdom of God*. Holiness here, is as essentially necessary to happiness hereafter, as life is necessary in order to breathe, or strength to walk. Without repentance, evangelical repentance towards God, and a living faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, die when we may, we are assured eternal destruction must be our portion†. How solicitously, then, should the hours of our health and vigor be engaged, in seeking after a true acquaintance with these things! The signal for our removal hence may be given at a moment's warning. Should we not, then, perpetually be, *as men that wait for their Lord, when he shall return from the wedding?* Should we not have our loins girt, and our lamps burning? Should we not be most earnestly giving diligence to make our calling and election sure? Death's thousand gates stand continually open, and there is

* John iii. 3, 5, 7. † Heb. xii. 14. Luke xiii. 3.
John iii. 18, 36.

not a pore of our bodies by which he may not at any time enter. Yet alas! alas! how ineffectual are these considerations, to rouse secure mortals from their sad insensibility, and their too eager attachment to temporal things, to a due attention to everlasting concerns! Numbers daily fall on our right hand and on our left, some by slow degrees, and others in the twinkling of an eye; yet the surviving crowds trifle still, as if they had an assured and eternal exemption from the arrests of death. O, that the voice which gave existence to the world, and calls the dead to life, may effectually awaken us from this wretched delirium; that we may not sleep as do others, but watch and be sober! Knowing the things that belong to our peace, may we wait all the *days of our appointed time till our change shall come!* May we have such a firm establishment in Christ, such a steady and unshaken affiance in his merits, and such an unfeigned and superlative love to his name, as may embolden us to look death in the face with
 comfort,

comfort, whenever he shall approach, or in whatever form attack us!

SECTION III.

The acuteness of the pain. Reflection on the awful punishment of sinners in hell.

HOW awfully severe are the paroxysms of this disease! How acute the pain when in its utmost violence! Witness ye who have experienced these agonies. A death-like coldness seizes the extremities, which is succeeded with the excessive heats of a scorching fever. Through all the pores, the attenuated juices gush out in smoky sweats. With incessant toil I toss from side to side, but seek relief in vain. The restless arteries beat strong and violent: the breath is fetched thick and pantingly, and the tongue is parched with thirst, which nothing can allay. While overwhelming sickness, by turns, threatens

threatens to seal up at once all the springs of life, and close the eyes to wake no more.

The extreme anguish of my body is heightened with all the horrors arising from great darkness of mind, and a sense of an absent God. *For these things I weep; mine eye, mine eye runneth down with water, because the Comforter that should relieve my soul is far from me. From above hath he sent fire into my bones, and it prevaieth against them*.* O, that I knew where I might find him! I turn to the right hand and to the left, behind and before, yet do I not perceive him! And though I cry and shout, *he shutteth out my prayer.* The terrors of the Almighty seem to set themselves in array against me. Surely he is entering into judgment with me. *He hath filled me with bitterness, he hath made me drunken with wormwood†.* The sorrows of death compass me about, and the pains of hell get hold upon me, Ps. cxvi. 3. OF HELL! Awful, alarming word! If my present agonies be almost insupportable, what must it be to

* Lam. i. 13, 16.

† Lam. iii. 15.

endure

endure the eternal horrors of the burning lake! Yet this is the just reward of sin. The sorrows I now endure, will not last for ever: a supporting, though but languid hope, props up my fainting heart, that I shall yet see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. But yonder dread abodes, are

Regions of sorrow! doleful shades! where peace
And rest can never dwell! hope never comes,
That comes to all: but torture without end
Still urges, and a fiery deluge, fed
With ever-burning sulphur, unconsum'd!*

Hark! methinks I hear the yells of yonder
blaspheming crowds! Methinks I see a
mighty throng of drunkards, liars, swearers,
adulterers, and other ranks of the profane,
weltering in the flaming billows, gnawing
their tongues for pain, and cursing them-
selves a thousand times for that height of
infatuation, folly and madness, which led
them headlong into that hopeless place.—

* Milton's Paradise Lost, b. I. l. 65.

Whom do I see in those dark regions, stung incessantly with the ruthless fangs of the never-dying worm? A numerous crowd, who once despised the gospel of God, and turned a deaf ear to the messages of salvation. In neglect and contempt of Christ, and the things of his kingdom, *they went away, one to his farm, another to his merchandise*; preferring, either the pleasures of sense, or the paltry concerns of this transitory world, to the treasures of the everlasting gospel, and the momentous affairs of eternity. *Wo unto them! it shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah than for them.* Whom, let me repeat the enquiry, whom do I behold in those infernal flames? *Dives.*—Eighteen hundred years has he cried out, in vain, for *one drop of water to cool his scorched tongue.* But are his miseries any nearer to a close? Ah, no! *The smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever**. *Their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched†.*

* Rev. xiv. 11. and xix. 3. † Mark ix. 44, 45.

Should the ablest arithmetician try to number the ages of eternity, he would be forever baffled. O, eternity! eternity! immense, unfathomable depth! Millions of millions of ages, and ten thousand times ten thousand millions more, would diminish nothing from the account of eternity! And is it possible for dying mortals to push the thought of this one moment from their bosoms? Is it possible for them to be as thoughtless about it, as if it were no more than an idle dream? What can exceed, what can equal the stupidity, the insensibility, the infatuation of sinful man! Sinner! where art thou? Just on the verge of the burning lake! Should the feeble thread of life be cut, shouldst thou die in thy present case, destruction, inevitable, eternal destruction awaits thee. Ask thyself seriously, *Canst thou dwell with devouring fire? Canst thou dwell with everlasting burnings?* If thou canst, go on: add iniquity to sin; still treasure up wrath against the day of wrath; and, for the sordid, the short-lived pleasures of

sin, reap eternal ages of wo and horror.
Thou art purchasing thy carnal delights at a
dear rate indeed. Such is the horrid nature
of sin, that its proper *wages*, its just desert,
is death, or everlasting banishment from
God, and an eternal hell of misery.

Then, then we may suppose the wretch to }
cry, }
“ Oh! if this dreadful God would let me }
die, }

And not torment me to eternity !
Infinite years in torment shall I spend,
And never, never, never have an end !
Ah ! must I live in torturing despair,
As many years as atoms in the air ?
When these are spent as many thousands more,
As grains of sand that crowd the ebbing shore !
When these are done, as many yet behind,
As leaves of forests shaken with the wind !
When these are gone, as many to ensue,
As stems of grass on hills and dales that grew !
When these run out, as many on the march,
As starry lamps that gild the spangled arch !

When

When these expire as many millions more,
 As moments in the millions past before !
 When all these doleful years are spent in pain,
 And multiplied by myriads again,
 Till numbers drown the thought ; could I
 suppose,
 That then my wretched years were at a close,
 This would afford some ease : but ah ! I shiver,
 To think upon that dreadful word, FOR EVER !
 The burning gulph where I blaspheming lie,
 Is time no more but *vast eternity*.
 The growing torment I endure for sin,
 Through ages all, is always to begin *."

Knowing these terrors of the Lord, by the
 awful views now before me, fain would I
 persuade my poor perishing fellow-sinners, to
 a consideration of their ways. *Consider this,*
all ye that forget God, lest he tear you in pieces,
and there be none to deliver. The wicked shall
be turned into hell, and all the nations that
forget God. Supposing a glass of the most

* *Erskin's Gospel Sonnets*, Part I. page 94.

deadly poison were set before you, richly sweetened, and you were forewarned what would be the certain effect of drinking it; would the transitory pleasure of tasting the delicious draught, tempt you to throw your precious life away in a moment? Sin is this sweetened draught that tempts you; but, O, remember, *death is in the pot*. You perhaps have known what it is to shrink at a light affliction, which is but for a moment; how then, think you, can you bear the never-ending vengeance of that powerful arm, which stretched out the heavens, laid the foundations of the earth, and poured out the waters of the mighty deep? O, *earth! earth! bear the word of the Lord**! There is but one way of escaping this *wrath to come*; but one door of hope, but one refuge†. And that is the Lord Jesus Christ; who cries to every alarmed, sensible sinner, *Look unto me and be saved, all the ends of the earth*‡. Conscious of this, let my own

* Jer. xxii. 29. † Acts iv. 12. Psalm xiv. 6.

‡ Isa. xlv. 22.

soul, and every other helpless, self-despairing sinner, flee speedily to the horns of this altar; and, with the utmost ardor, lay hold on this hope set before us!

Jesus, I throw my arms around,

I hang upon thy breast;

Without a gracious smile from thee,

My spirit cannot rest.

SECTION IV.

Relief under the consciousness of guilt, by views of the atonement of Christ.

MY conscience recollects the follies of my youth, and the long train of later and more aggravated offences, and tells me it would be just in God for ever to condemn me. I acknowledge the humbling, the awful truth. I can rank amongst none but the chief of sinners. *Father, I have sinned a-*

gainst heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.

I can draw no comfort from my own obedience: all that I can say is, I have aimed at sincerity and uprightness, and my conscience does not accuse me of the contrary. But, alas! alas! I have failed in every point. My poor, lame, mangled obedience, fills me with shame upon every view of it. In myself I am a wretched, miserable offender. *Lord, thou knowest all my foolishness, and my sins are not hid from thee.* Shame, confusion, and death, are my due. *Thou writest bitter things against me, and makest me to possess the sins of my youth. It is of thy mercies, O Lord, that I am not consumed.*

But lo! the divine Redeemer has bled and died; bled and died, as a propitiation for our sins! Cheering declaration!—But is it true indeed? Yes; *it is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief*.* He bath loved us, and washed

* 1 Tim. i. 15.

*us from our sins in his own blood**. Happy tidings ! Welcome news ! Transporting discovery ! More welcome than *cold water to the thirsty soul* ; more delightful than the sweetest charms, of the most melodious music, to the listening ear. It is joy in trouble, and light in darkness ; it is health in sickness, and life in death. I feel, yes, adored be divine grace ! I feel its sovereign energy, to quell the rising tempest in my troubled breast.

“ Where, now, O, where shall wrathful thunders fall ?

“ Christ’s blood o’erspreads and shields me from them all.”

The glory of this soul-quickenning truth, sheds its sacred influence on my drooping mind. *He gave himself for us* † ; not barely for our

* *Rev.* i. 5.

† *Tit.* ii. 14. *υπερ ημων* : *υπερ*, *αντι*, and *περι*, are the words generally used in the New Testament, on this subject ; all expressive of Christ’s substitution in our stead.

good, but absolutely in our stead. Our sins were caused *to meet* * *upon him*; and for these he was *stricken, smitten of God and afflicted. He was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities.* Thus, by his own dear life, he ransomed guilty worms from death. The vials of wrath, due to my provocations, were all poured out on the head of that spotless victim. Here is *the door of hope, in the valley of Achor.*

My faith now fixes on a bleeding, dying Christ, and looks to the *Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world.* The question is not now, Whether God can be just in pardoning the vilest sinner. This has been determined long ago, by the adorable Trinity. *I will betroth thee to me forever, yea, I will betroth thee in righteousness and judgment, Hos. ii. 19. q. d. Trouble not your thoughts how to clear my justice in that act. I know what I do; and I know the thoughts that I have towards you, thoughts of peace, and*

* *Isai. liii. 6. הפגיע fecit occurrere. Montanus.*

not of evil. The case is well weighed and
equitably settled. The just and holy God
can righteously pardon. For O, my soul!
dwell on the life-giving theme,

The ransom was paid down; the fund of
heaven,

Heaven's inexhaustible, exhausted fund,

Amazing and amaz'd, pour'd forth the price,

All price beyond: tho' curious to compute,

Archangels fail'd to cast the mighty sum.

Ah! the enormous load of human guilt,

Which bow'd his blessed head; o'erwhelm'd
his cross;

Made groan the centre; burst earth's marble
womb

With pangs, strange pangs! delivered of her
dead!

Hell howl'd; and heaven that hour let fall
a tear;

Heav'n wept that men might smile! Heav'n
bled that men

Might never die!——

He seiz'd our dreadful right; the load sustain'd

And

And heav'd the mountain from a guilty world:
In heav'n itself can such indulgence dwell * ?

My soul flees to Jesus, and takes sanctuary
in his satisfaction. This is her privileged
place, where neither law nor justice will arrest
her. *Rom. iii. 24, 25, 26. Being justified
freely by his grace, through the redemption that
is in Jesus Christ: whom God hath set forth to
be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to
declare his righteousness for the remission of sins
that are past, through the forbearance of God;
to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness:
that he might be just and the justifier of him that
believeth in Jesus. O blessed ground of com-
fort and peace! Here is firm footing, here is
solid rock. Now I am upon the verge of
eternity, and perhaps just going to launch
into the invisible world, I can find consola-
tion in nothing short of this precious truth:—
complete, entire, everlasting satisfaction made
for sin, by the death of Christ. He hath*

* Night-Thoughts, No. 4.

put away sin by the sacrifice of himself; and by one offering perfected for ever them that are sanctified. Two payments can never, righteously, be demanded for the same debt. Lo! the fountain is opened for sin and uncleanness. The blood of Jesus Christ his Son, cleanseth us from all sin. What a solace in life, what a comfort in death, to a poor self-condemned criminal, is this leading and capital truth of the everlasting gospel! Encouraged by this, may I not say, *Who shall condemn me? It is God that justifies; it is Christ that died!* Rom. viii. 33, 34. Be it that my sins are as scarlet, and more in number than the hairs of my head, yet the blood of Christ shall wash me white as snow. Through him, our God will abundantly pardon, and cast all our sins into the depth of the sea. To him give all the prophets witness, that whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins. If the law requires punishment, Jesus, as the end of it, sustained torments unutterable. If it insists on blood; Jesus has answered its requirements with blood divine. Does it call for
righte-

righteousness ? Jesus voluntarily submitted to its authority, performed to the utmost every jot and tittle of its commands ; and thereby, to the honor of God, and the everlasting consolation of all that believe, brought in *perfect and everlasting righteousness*. Hence *there is*, there can be *no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus* ; and as a proof of their being so, *walk, not after the flesh, but after the Spirit*. Rom. viii. 1. O, precious Christ ! precious blood ! precious salvation ! Sure relief, this, for a wounded conscience ; honorable to God, safe for man, and most efficacious in its influence on the heart, to engage it to love, and stimulate it to obedience. Those who talk of this doctrine having a licentious tendency, give the fullest proof that they have not the experimental knowledge of it ; and, as such, they *speak evil of what they understand not*. *We love him because he first loved us*. We are engaged most powerfully to live to him, because he died for us. O ! the blessings, the comforts, that spring from a right knowledge of Jesus !

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This is the knowledge which the blessed apostle *Paul* valued above all other accomplishments; in comparison of which, he counted all things but *loss and dung*. The knowledge of Jesus and him crucified, was, with him, the *one thing needful* *.

SECTION V.

*The sovereign support which the gospel affords,
in the immediate views of death.*

THOSE truths which I have endeavoured, in my poor feeble way, to hold forth to others, are my support and comfort now. And O, how sovereign are they for that purpose! The doctrines of the divine word are at all times, if properly applied, the noblest cordials that can be administered to the afflicted breast: when it is out of the power of any worldly considerations

* 1 Cor. ii. 2. Phil. iii. 7, 8, 9.

to afford relief, how salutary have these been found to sustain the fainting heart ! How enlivening the consideration of that *everlasting covenant*, which is *ordered in all things and sure, and contains all our salvation and all our desire !* How relieving the thought of peace being made by the blood of the cross ! The view of the sufficiency of pardon through the atoning sacrifice of the Son of God ; of deliverance from the thralldom of sin, the tyranny of Satan, the sting of death, and the power of the grave, through the complete conquest he has gained ! And how animating the prospect of that *life and immortality, which he has brought to light by the gospel !* How reviving the many *exceeding great and precious promises of his word !* That *he will never leave nor forsake us ;* that when we *pass through the fire he will be with us, and through the waters, they shall not overflow us ;* and that, *when flesh and heart fail, he will be the strength of our heart, and our portion forever.*

The Psalmist says, *Unless thy law had been my delight, I should then have perished in mine affliction.*

affliction. Ps. cxix. 92. And again, This is my comfort in my affliction, for thy word hath quickened me. Ver. 50. To the divine word he was indebted for all his comfort. The promises have been called by some, the saints legacies; the breasts of God, full of the milk of grace and comfort; the saint's plank, to swim upon to heaven; and the like. How little can any creature contribute to the comfort of one, agonizing in the pangs of death! 'Tis the divine word only, that can afford relief. This only is able to buoy up the soul, and keep it from sinking in the overwhelming billows of affliction and sorrow. I will never forget thy precepts, for with them thou hast quickened me. Ps. cxix. 93.

When fore afflictions press me down,

I need thy quickening pow'rs;

Thy word that I have rested on,

Shall help my heaviest hours.

A word from God's mouth can heal a wounded distressed spirit, even while the body still

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continues

continues to pine and languish. *In the multitude of my thoughts within me, thy comforts delight my soul.* A word of promise applied to the heart, will conquer the horrors of death, will make a legion of devils flee, and turn our hell to heaven. A word from thy lips, O, my God! can remove mountains of guilt, fear, and despair; and fill the heart with sacred joy and peace, in spite of all the united efforts of Satan and unbelief to disquiet it.

- ‘ One glance of thine, one piercing ray
- ‘ Shall kindle darkness into day.
- One word of thine shall quell my inward strife,
- And call thy half-dead servant back to life;
- Shall sooth my passions, all my fears control,
- And with that peace divine fill all my soul,
- ‘ Which nothing earthly gives, nor can destroy,
- ‘ The mind’s calm sun-shine, and the heart-felt joy.

SECTION VI.

Death disarmed.

THE pale messenger seems to be approaching. It is probable I have but a few days, a few hours longer to live. But, glory be to God! I am not afraid to die. Death comes, not armed with those horrors in which I have sometimes beheld him; he approaches with an angel's face, and a deliverer's hand. It is sin alone which furnishes death with his dreadful sting; and through the atoning blood of the dying Saviour, all my sins are done away. O, precious Christ! precious blood! and precious faith, by which we are enabled to claim an interest in both!

Death's terror is the mountain faith removes,
 'Tis faith disarms destruction —
 Believe, and look with triumph on the tomb.

O, my friends ! 'tis sweet lying in these circumstances, when we can, with propriety, adopt the noble challenge ; *Death, where is thy sting ? Grave, where is thy victory* * ? I have ventured my all in the hands of the Saviour of sinners. Here I cast the anchor of my everlasting hopes, and here I leave myself. I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded he is able to keep that, which I have committed to him, against that day. The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, *The Lord knoweth them that are his*. I have the promise and the oath of the eternal God, for my support, security, and consolation. *He that believeth on me*, saith the Lord Redeemer, *shall never die* : i. e. shall not die eternally †. He is faithful that hath promised. What is there in death, that I should dread ? The sons of Jacob were not afraid to go down into *Egypt*, when they knew that their dear brother was governor of the country ; why then should I shudder at the

* 1 Cor. xv. 55.

† John xi. 26.

thoughts of death, since this shall transmit me into the presence of my dear Lord and Saviour? No—: in this happy hour I perceive nothing dreadful in the aspect of death. He approaches my bed, he accosts my languishing heart, but with no tokens of defiance; armed with no frightful sting, but commissioned on an errand of peace. He bespeaks me with gentle invitations from my gracious Redeemer. Welcome, welcome, thou kind messenger of my liberty and happiness! Cut short thy work upon me: execute thy office: open the prison doors: knock off my fetters, and let my soul now gain her sweet release from cumberous flesh, and take her speedy flight to *Abraham's bosom*. Come, ye bright celestial spirits, ye guardians of the just; take me on your wings, and convey me safe through the airy regions.

Hark! they whisper! angels say,
Sister spirit, come away!

The world recedes ; it disappears !

Heav'n opens to my eyes ! my ears

With sounds seraphic ring :

Lend, lend your wings ! I mount ! I fly !

O, grave, where is thy victory ?

O, death, where is thy sting ?

‘ Hold out faith and patience ; ’tis but a
 ‘ little, a very little while, and your work
 ‘ will be at an end. Soon the sighs and
 ‘ groans shall be converted into everlasting
 ‘ hallelujahs. A few weary steps more, and
 ‘ the journey of life will be finished. A few
 ‘ struggles more, and the warfare will be
 ‘ accomplished, the conflict shall cease, and
 ‘ the happy season of bliss and triumph com-
 ‘ mence. After these painful agonies, how
 ‘ greedily shall I drink in immortal ease and
 ‘ pleasure ? Adieu to sickness, and these ex-
 ‘ cruciating pains, for ever. Adieu to sor-
 ‘ row, sadness and sighing ; all tears shall
 ‘ be wiped away ; and the Lamb, which is
 ‘ in the midst of the throne, shall lead me to
 ‘ fountains

‘ fountains of living water. Break away, ye
 ‘ thick clouds; begone, ye envious shades,
 ‘ and let me see the glories you conceal: let
 ‘ me survey the happy regions, I hope, ere
 ‘ long, to possess. O, blest eternity! With
 ‘ thee come liberty, and peace, and love,
 ‘ and endless felicity; pain and sorrow, and
 ‘ tumult, and death, and darkness, vanish
 ‘ before thee for ever.

‘ Yonder are the delectable hills, and har-
 ‘ monious vales, which continually echo to
 ‘ the songs of angels. There the blissful
 ‘ fields extend their verdure, and there
 ‘ the immortal groves ascend; but, how
 ‘ dazling is thy prospect, O, city of God, of
 ‘ which such glorious things are spoken!

‘ There holy souls perpetual sabbaths keep,
 ‘ And never are concern’d for food or
 sleep:

‘ There new-come saints with wreaths of
 light are crown’d,

‘ While ivory harps and silver trumpets
 found:

‘ There flaming seraphs sacred hymns begin,
‘ And raptur’d cherubs loud responses sing *.’

The *Jordan* of death is a shallow and fordable stream: the Lord of life and glory has passed through before me, in his way to yonder happy world. I see the footsteps of my dear Saviour at the bottom, and heaven and happiness on the other side. *Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil, for thou art with me; and, having such a convoy, what should I dread?*

Then shall ye hear my heart-strings break,
How sweet the minutes roll!
A mortal paleness on my cheek
And glory in my soul.

* Mrs. Rowe’s Devout Exer.

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SECTION VII.

The wonders of divine love and grace.

HOW could the Almighty have given us a brighter display, or a more pregnant proof, of his infinitely rich grace and love, than he has done, by surrendering his only begotten Son to condemnation and death for our sakes? Talk we of wonders? All wonders are lost in that of the incarnation and bloody passion of the adorable Jesus. Who can measure the height, who can fathom the depth, or tell the length and breadth of that love of the eternal God, which thus spake in reference to my poor sinful perishing soul? “My Son shall bleed, that thou mayest be healed: my Son shall die, that thou mayest live for ever: for I have said, *Mercy shall be built up for ever.*” Was it not likewise astonishing and unmeasurable love in the dear Redeemer, thus to speak: “Will-
ingly,

ingly, willingly I become incarnate ; I give myself to be made a curse, to bleed, to suffer, to die, that this poor rebel may be brought back to God ; that this condemned criminal may be pardoned and saved."

Amazing grace ! look down ye higher skies !
 Ye angels gaze with ever-new surprize ;
 And let each dweller on the earth below,
 See here what our redeeming God can do ;
 Let ev'ry needy soul his bounty prove ;
 Ye cannot hope too largely from his love *.

There is nothing in us, or done by us, that can be a motive, inducement, or recompence to this love. It is as absolutely free as it is unspeakably great. Christ loved us, not on account of any foreseen excellency in us, or upon any expectation of recompence from us. Nay, he loved us, not only without, but

* See an anonymous pamphlet, published two years ago, by the author of these pages, entitled, *The Christian's humble Plea for his God and Saviour*. Pr. 6d. Printed for M. Lewis, No. 1. Paternoster-row.

against our deserts. And who can number, who can value the fruits and blessings of this love? Greater I cannot desire, richer I cannot enjoy. And they are more in number than the sands on the sea-shore. How many sins does it pardon, how many wants does it supply, how many evils does it secure from, and how many gifts, honors and privileges, does it confer! What opposition does it overcome, and what obstacles remove! How sovereign its power, as well as superabundant its riches! If ever my poor soul is brought to yonder bright world above, *grace, grace* must be my theme eternity along. None so great a debtor to rich grace as I. I would live and die in the admiration of it.

O, goodness infinite! goodness immense,
And love that passeth knowledge! Words are
vain,
Language is lost in wonders so divine,
Come then expressive silence, muse his praise*.

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* May I be permitted to recommend to my readers,
that valuable and evangelical book, written by my
much

SECTION VIII.

The glories of the heavenly world.

WHEN it was asked one, What he was made for; he answered, *That I might meditate on heaven* *. Surely the believing soul is re-born for this noble end. Consider, O my soul, what and where thou shalt be in a little while. What?—a glorified saint, a triumphant conqueror, a crowned king, a companion of cherubims, an attendant on the Lamb whithersoever he goeth, a spectator of all the glories of the upper world!—Where? Far beyond the sun and stars; in the regions of immortal day, the celestial city, the heavenly Jerusalem. In that city which is of pure, transparent gold; whose

much respected friend, Mr. Booth, entitled, *The Reign of Grace, from its Rise to its Consummation*; Second Edition? Sold by Dilly in the Poultry, and Harris in St. Paul's Church-yard.

* *Anaxagoras.*

foundations

foundations are garnished with all manner of precious stones; whose gates are pearls, whose light is glory, and whose temple is the living God. Is it called a kingdom? It is a kingdom of righteousness*. It is a kingdom of peace†. A kingdom of glory‡; and an everlasting kingdom, 2 Pet. i. 11. *Then shall the righteous shine as the sun, in the kingdom of their Father.*—There I shall join the innumerable company of angels: And if they are happily instrumental in my well-being here; much more, may I suppose, will they be so there, when I shall be more capable of receiving from them. If now there is joy in the presence of the angels of God, over one sinner that repenteth, what will there be over a perfect, glorified soul? If our angels there behold our Father's face, how glad will they be of our safe arrival on those peaceful shores, and of our perpetual company? And, surely, love and union will make these joys reciprocal. We shall join the happy

* 2 Pet. i. 13.

† Rom. xiv. 17.

‡ 1 Thess. ii. 1.

choir,

choir, who rest not, day nor night, saying ;
Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty ! which
art, and wast, and art to come, Rev. xxi.
 23.

Nor is this all : There will likewise be the company and blessed society of glorified saints, who shall doubtless have a clear and distinct knowledge one of another. Can I imagine that the knowledge of the inhabitants of that happy world, shall be more imperfect than the knowledge of saints below ? Shall we not know much more, and not less, than we do here ? Does not heaven exceed earth, as much in knowledge as in joy ? Have not the blessed angels a distinct knowledge of the meanest believer on earth ? And are they not, as such, stiled *their angels* ? Shall we not, then, have a certain and intimate knowledge of our nearest friends ? If the two disciples knew *Moses* and *Elijah* on the Mount, whom they had never seen before ; much more shall those who have been connected by the sweetest ties of Christian fellowship

fellowship below, have the happiness of a clear knowledge of one another in heaven*.

And O, how delightful will that communion of saints be, where the warmest love and the firmest concord ever preside! Remember, O my soul, how sweet the course of my pilgrimage has been rendered, by the fragrance and usefulness of the graces of thy fellow-christians! How sweet have my faithful bosom friends and companions been! How comforting, refreshing, reviving their holy assemblies, heavenly conversation, and devout prayers! What then, O, what will

* My old acquaintance, with many a holy person gone to Christ, makes my thoughts of heaven the more familiar to me. O, how many of them could I name! And it is no small encouragement to one, who is to enter upon an unseen world, to think that he goes no untrodden path, nor enters into a solitary or singular state; but follows all that have passed by death, from the creation to this day, into endless life. How emboldening to consider, that I am to go the same way, and to the same place and state, with all the believers and saints that have ever gone before me!

Baxter's Dying Thoughts abridged, p. 47.

it be, to live in the highest perfection of love with glorified saints in heaven for ever !

And you, my dear friends, who have been my choicest companions here, it rejoices me to think of having your company and fellowship in the upper world.

We'll charge our parting souls to meet above,
In yon blest regions of immortal love ;
Where friendship, heaven-born, full growth
attains,

And ever flourishes, and ever reigns.

Come, then, my dear companions in tribulation, let us be of good cheer : soon the imperfect fellowship which we enjoy together below, shall be perfected in the kingdom of our Father. We have sighed and sung, rejoiced and wept together, by turns, below ; and, by a tender sympathizing concern, born one another's burdens, strengthened one another's hands, and each contributed to the advancement of his brother's joy. A friendship so divine,

Where

Where heart meets heart riciprocally kind,

must subfist for ever. Death itself fhall not diffolve the tie : the unfeen world fhall neither deftroy nor diminifh the privilege, but heighten, ennoble and advance it, beyond all conception. Let us then look over the few intervening days of forrow and affliction below, and ever live in the joyful expectation of our meeting around the throne of God and of the Lamb.

There, on a green and flow'ry mount,
Our weary fouls fhall fit ;
And with transporting joys recount
The labours of our feet.

But after all, may I not fay as others have done before me, Lord ! I would not care for heaven, were it not for the hope of enjoying thee there ? Where the King is, there is the court ; and where the prefence of God is, there is heaven. Were there no manfion of blifs to entertain me, no weight

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of

of glory to crown me, no angels of light to attend me, yet God would be *all in all*.—— Think, O my soul, what a life thou shalt live in the presence and bosom of infinite and eternal love! I now behold him as through a glass, dimly and obscurely, as through the crevices of my darksome habitation; but then he will shine on me and in me openly, with the most refulgent beams of love for ever. I shall joyfully behold his open, unveiled face; and listen, without obstructing mediums, to the ravishing, transporting voice of his mouth. His gracious looks through the lattice, have often revived me below; but then shall my satisfaction be full and complete, when I *behold his face in righteousness, and awake in his likeness*, Ps. xvii. 15. All beauty, excellency, and perfection, center in him. Whatever there is of loveliness in any, or all, of his creatures, is found in full perfection in him, and infinitely more. *He is the chiefest among ten thousand; he is altogether lovely*, Cant. v. 10, 16. His presence makes heaven

ven what it is. His smiles create eternal day in the bright regions above; and fill the celestial assembly with transports of delight. *Oh, that my words were now written; oh, that they were printed in a book! That they were graven with an iron pen and lead, in the rock for ever! For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth. And though, after my skin, worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold and not another; though my reins be consumed within me**. There I shall see the sacred body of the Son of God, now glorified and shining with ineffable splendor. The same immaculate body which the virgin bore,—which conversed with the doctors in the temple, which *John* baptized, and the disciples saw transfigured on the Mount. Those blessed feet which went about doing good; which *Mary* washed with her tears, and wiped with the hair of

* *Job* xix. 23—27.

her head; and which, at length, were transfixed and nailed to the fatal tree. The temples once crowned with lacerating thorns, and the face once defiled with shameful spitting, but now shining with unutterable radiancy, splendor and glory. Those dear hands, so often stretched out to heal the sick, and at length extended on the ignominious cross, when the rude iron tore the shivering nerves, till he said, *It is finished*, and bowed his head and gave up the ghost. The print of the nails, and the other scars of honor in his flesh, which doubting *Thomas* once saw and handled, will be ever beheld with inexpressible wonder, love, and joy, by all the tribes of the redeemed. *Thine eyes shall behold the King in his beauty**. See him who for thy sake, was gashed with wounds, and covered with blood; who was pierced with nails, and stabbed to the heart; *by whose stripes thou art healed*. See him who once, when working out salvation for

* *Isa.* xxxiii. 17.

us, had not where to lay his head, was an exile in *Egypt*, a prisoner at *Pilate's* bar, a corpse in *Joseph's* sepulchre; but who rose triumphant thence, bursting the adamantine chains and iron bars of death, and ascended up on high, *leading captivity captive*. Thou shalt see him who is now in the midst of the throne, who *looks like a Lamb that has been slain*, and yet is *King of kings, and Lord of lords*; who is worshipped, honored and adored by all the angelic hosts, and all the *spirits of just men made perfect*. Thou shalt be in *his presence, where there is fulness of joy*, and at *his right hand, where there are pleasures for evermore*. *Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing*,
 Rev. v. 12.

Fellow-faints this bliss pursue,
 Press ye on to reach the prize;
 Bid this flattering world adieu,
 Fix above your longing eyes.

Lo the kind Redeemer waits,
To receive you to his breast,
Open stand the blissful gates,
Angels call you there to rest.

SECTION IX.

Longing to be dismissed.

WHY is his chariot so long a coming?
why linger the wheels of his chariot?
Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly!

Haste, my Beloved, fetch my soul,
Up to thy blest abode;
Fly, for my spirit longs to see
My Saviour and my God.

O, happy event! that will ease me of all
the aches of my body, and all the conflicts
of my soul! Death, like a physician of va-
lue, shall at once cure all my distempers in-
both. I shall then no more hear from a
fellow-

fellow-mortal's tongue, what a glorious place the heavenly *Jerusalem* is, but I shall walk, myself, in the golden streets of the city of our God. One moment's sight of it will inform me more what it is, than all the volumes in my library could ever do. *How long, O Lord, holy and true!* Speak the word, and sign my release from cumberous flesh. Bid me that I come unto thee, as thou didst *Peter* upon the water: reach forth thy gracious hand, and take me to thy bosom. *When shall I come and appear before God!*

O, to mount! to mount away!
And leave this clod of heavy clay!

I cannot but, in some sort, shrink back at the thoughts of a recovery, and returning to the world again, though, on some accounts, desirable. Discouragements arise from the view of my own great weakness, and the numberless enemies, snares and dangers, which beset our path; lest I should in one thing or another, dishonor that sacred name,

and injure that good cause, which are dearer to me than life. I tremble, I shudder at the thought! I long for those peaceful and holy regions, where sin and temptation shall be known no more. If my heart deceive me not, I feel a willingness to bear the sorrows and afflictions of this mortal state, but I dread the thoughts of being ensnared by sin. I have a *desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better*, than even being employed in his service below; *nevertheless to abide in the flesh may seem more needful* * for my family, my flock, and the youths committed to my care. Much rather would I even be continued on this bed of pain, excruciating as it is, than live in health and ease to dishonor God.—But *why art thou cast down, O my soul? Why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God* †. He is not only faithful to his promise, made to his people, that they shall never finally perish; but he is *able to keep them from falling* in their

* Phil. i. 23, 24.

† Psa. xlii. 11.

way to the kingdom, and *present them before the presence of his glory**. This, O my God, is the summit of my wishes. I ask not long life, nor the riches, honors, or pleasures of this world : all I desire is, that I may be introduced into thy glorious presence at last, and be kept from sin and every unworthy practice, in my way thither. Grant me this, for thy own honor, and I ask no more. It would not satisfy me only to die the *death*, I would also live the *life* of the righteous. I ask not exemption from sufferings, but preservation from sin ; and then, call me to what thou pleasest ;

—— With the *Patriarch's* joy,
Thy call I follow to the land unknown ;
I trust in thee, and know in whom I trust :
Or life, or death, is equal ; neither weighs ;
All weight in this—O, let me live to thee†!

* *Jude* 24.

† *Night Thoughts*, No. 4.

SECTION X.

*The vanity of the world, and God our only
happiness.*

'TIS finish'd now, the great deciding
part;
The world's subdu'd, and heav'n has all my
heart.

What is the amount of all that this world
can tempt me with? Vindictive flames are
ready to consume it. Unhappy is he
who has no better portion than what this
fluctuating world can afford. He may,
notwithstanding this, be not only miser-
able for ever hereafter, but even a stranger
to peace here; and, like *the troubled sea,*
which cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire
and dirt. The time of mourning for the
departure of all earthly enjoyments is at
hand: we shall see them as *Eglon's servants*
did

did their lord, fallen down dead before us; and weep because they are not. *Riches make themselves wings and fly away. They profit not in the day of wrath.* Were they true riches, yet they are not ours; were they ours, yet are they not durable, but *uncertain riches**. Honor and fame are the temptation with some. But how arduous the task to obtain the bait! and what is it when enjoyed? It is a vain puff of noisy breath: deceitful as a brook, uncertain as a wave of the sea, transitory and fleeting as the breaking bubble. He that thinks he shall one day be made happy in this, is pursuing an empty shadow, grasping the volatile smoke; or, in the language of inspiration, he is *sowing the wind, and shall reap the whirlwind*†. The carnal pleasures of this world, at best, are only vanity and froth; and, frequently, wormwood and gall. To be enamoured with these, is death. A dying-bed will tear away the mask from all these flattering delusions, and set them be-

* 1. Tim. vi. 17.

† Hos. viii. 7.

fore us in a just and proper light. In affliction's glass, we may plainly perceive, the vanity, meanness, and contemptible littleness of this world, and the importance and amazing greatness of the next. Lord, let the thoughts of the glory and bliss, which thou hast prepared for me in heaven, for ever cause me to turn away with disdain from the delusive baubles, the tempting pleasures and delights, of this world! Hast thou prepared a mansion for me in heaven, and shall I still grovel in the mire and dirt of this earth? Who would place so large and capacious a vessel as the immortal soul, under a few drops of carnal pleasure, and neglect the source of everlasting joy? Who would disregard a kingdom to embrace a dunghill? If a heathen could say, "I am born to greater and higher things, than to be a drudge to the world *;" much more should the Christian thus judge. *We are born to liberty and honor*, says another of the sages of anti-

* Seneca.

quity.

quity *. But the blessed gospel only can teach us what liberty and honor are. The volume of inspiration shews us, that God himself is the centre, rest, refuge, portion, and exceeding great reward of an immortal soul. We are created with capacities and powers, so extended in their grasp, so unbounded in their aim, that nothing short of an infinite good can fill them. It is well observed by an ancient Christian writer, that, *To love the chiefest good is our greatest happiness* †. God is the highest perfection in himself, and the highest good to the creature; hence it must be the soul's highest wisdom to choose him, cleave to him, and rest in him for ever. O, my soul, God is thy end and excellency; and thy happiness lies in the enjoyment of him. The felicity of man consists in his favour. His love is better than life. His smile constitutes heaven; and his frown

* Ad decus & libertatem nati sumus. *Cicero.*

† Summum bonum amare, est summa beatitudo.
Bernard.

is worse than destruction. Ye earthly vanities adieu! My soul is winged, by heaven, to grasp at an infinite good. Lord, *I follow hard after thee. Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee.* "Let it not offend thee, "that a worm of the earth adores and loves "thee." Thou hast formed me with capacities and powers, which nothing short of thy own infinite self can satisfy. The wide creation affords nothing suited to my enlarged and extended desires. Deprived of the enjoyment of thee, I should eternally pine away in poverty and wretchedness. My soul can meet with no other object suited to her wishes. Thou only canst fill the capacious desires of the immortal mind: and thou art all in all. In the absence of every thing else,

God, in himself, is bliss enough
For thee, my soul, for thee.

Now

Now I forbid my carnal hope,
 My fond desires recall ;
 I give my mortal int'rests up,
 For thee, my God, my all.

Let others stretch their arms like seas,
 And grasp in all the shore ;
 Grant me the visits of thy face,
 And I desire no more.

SECTION XI.

The profit of afflictions.

HAD we been without our sharpest trials, we should, probably, have missed our sweetest consolations. The Christian's heaviest sorrows and choicest comforts often go hand in hand. Yea, when tribulation abounds, consolation, sometimes, superabounds. The charitable relieve the poor and indigent, as their necessities increase ; even so, the Lord Jesus Christ comforts his people

people as their troubles multiply. *In the day that I cried thou answeredst me, and strengthenedst me with strength in my soul. Ps. cxxxviii.*

3. The divine promises are like vessels of cordial wine, reserved for, and broached in, times of distress. The dear child of God is made to experience, that there is a sweet and soul-supporting somewhat, which unregenerate hearts do not experience, in having a God to go to and call upon in the day of trouble. He has said, *Jer. xxxiii. 3. Call unto me, I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things which thou knowest not.* The furnace is no unusual place in which to find the saints of God; nor is it any unusual thing to find God himself in the furnace with them; especially, when it is, as it were, heated seven times hotter than usual. *I will be with him in trouble,* is his gracious promise*. He is afflicted in all the afflictions of his people, and is as ready to succour them, as a man is to comfort his dearest

child, or to allay the anguish of his own smarting flesh *. *This is the will of God, even our sanctification.* And that afflictive dispensations are the appointed means for promoting that end, the divine word abundantly testifies †. *This is all the fruit, to take away his sin.*—He chastens for our profit, to make us partakers of his holiness ‡. May we not, then, truly say, *Happy is the man whom*

* *Isai. lxiii. 9. Zech. ii. 8.*

† I beg leave here to introduce the famous answer, of the truly great and venerable Archbishop *Usher*, to some of his friends, who pressed him to give them his thoughts on that question; Wherein consists the essence of true gospel-sanctification. After waiting some time, he would gladly have been excused from answering the question; and that, as he declared, because he feared he knew but little of it experimentally.—But his friends still pressing him, the reverend Prelate at length gave his answer in the following words: “The essence of true gospel-sanctification consists, in having my will swallowed up in the will of God.” Precious and comprehensive definition indeed! The good Lord perfect it in my own heart! The more I think upon it, the more I admire the justness and propriety of it.

‡ *Isai. xxvii. 9. Heb. xii. 5—10.*

God correcteth? Job. v. 17. Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest and teachest him out of thy law. Ps. xciv. 12. By afflictions we gain much knowledge of ourselves. When corrupt nature is vexed, it shews itself. As in tempestuous weather, the chinks and openings in the walls of our houses are most sensibly perceived; so in sharp afflictions we learn our own defects and weaknesses.*

Afflictions tend to wean us from the world. When uninterrupted health and prosperity attend us, we are apt to be too much pleased with our present condition, and to lose sight of the crown of glory, and the everlasting mansions above; but the loud alarm of afflictive dispensations, rouses us from the enchanting delusion. The violence of a tempest teaches the mariner to long the more earnestly for the haven of rest.

Afflictions serve, likewise, to quicken us in our applications to the Lord Jesus Christ. While in ease and tranquility, a spirit of su-

* *Natura vexata, prodit seipsam.*

pineness too often possesses the mind, in regard to Christ and the blessings of his salvation: but, when the tides of distress and sorrow come rolling in upon us, we are willing, we are glad to seek rest in him who is *the hope of Israel, and the Saviour thereof in the time of trouble*. On all these, and many other accounts, I hope I can say; *It is good for me that I have been afflicted* *. Yea, thanks to my heavenly Father's name, for the sharpest pains I have felt.—In truly sanctified afflictions we have a striking solution of *Samson's* riddle. How often and how remarkably is it explained to, and fulfilled in the experiences of God's saints, in times of distress! That *out of the eater comes forth meat*, and *out of the strong, sweetness* †. How fit is it that he, who is infinitely wise and unmeasurably kind, should choose our inheritance for us! And how does it become us to acquiesce entirely in his appointment!

* *Psf.* cxix. 71.† *Judg.* xiv. 14.

Good when he gives, supremely good,
Nor less when he denies ;
Afflictions from his sovereign hand,
Are BLESSINGS IN DISGUISE.

The Lord has just removed my dear, lovely boy, perhaps, to teach me, that himself has the highest right and truest claim to my heart. Amen ; even so Lord Jesus !

Take my poor heart, and let it be
For ever clos'd to all but thee ;
Seal thou my breast, and let me wear,
That pledge of love for ever there.

God has spoken once, yea twice, and his hand has touched my own frame. This, perhaps, is to teach me, that the present world is not my rest ; but that he will, ere long, remove me from hence. The swelling waves of affliction are but to raise me nearer heaven, and the yawning deeps are designed to awaken me to my Master.

All

All these considerations should teach me to be patient, humble, and resigned. *I was dumb, I opened not my mouth, to murmur or repine, because thou didst it **. I know from whom this awful stroke came. *Thou didst it.* Thou whom I have offended, and therefore ought to take it patiently; thou whom I love, and so can take it kindly. The Lord has not dealt with me according to my deserts. I am chastened, but not consumed. I lie in a bed of pain, but instead of this I might have had a bed of flames. *I am poor and needy, but the Lord thinketh upon me in my low estate, and puts underneath me his everlasting arms.* I accept, therefore, this correction most thankfully; yea, *though he slay me, yet will I trust in him.* Job xiii. 15. He visits me with his rod, but this is in mercy. The rod comes on mercy's errand. He kindly sweetens the bitter cup, and *makes all my bed in my sickness.* This calms my soul, and quiets every unruly thought and

Pf. xxxix. 9.

passion. I charge my heart to be silent and patient still, and to wait for the salvation of the Lord*. I would *humble myself under this mighty hand of God*. May his fatherly chastisement *bring forth in me the peaceable fruits of righteousness*. May my whole soul be sweetly and happily stayed on the divine power, truth, faithfulness, wisdom and love; that I may be enabled to bow with humility, submission and adoration, before my God and Father, saying; *Here I am, let him do to me as seemeth good in his sight*. I know he is too wise to be mistaken; he is too good to be unkind; and that he is *leading me forth by a right*, though it be a rough way, *that I may go to a city of habitation*. *Pf. cvii. 7*. May I bow my head, and dutifully stand in the lot which the Al-

* *Dum mala pungunt, bona promissa ungunt*. God sometimes corrects with outward afflictions, but smiles with inward manifestations; the latter sweeten and alleviate the former. He whips us, if I may so speak, with a rosemary rod. *Gurnal*.

mighty

mighty Sovereign is pleased to assign: Come
then, my soul,

Commit thou all thy griefs
And ways into his hands,
To his sure truth and tender care,
Who earth and heaven commands.

Far, far above thy thought,
His counsel shall appear,
When fully he the work hath wrought
That caus'd thy needful fear.

Thou shalt in life and death,
His stedfast truth declare;
And publish with thy latest breath
His love and guardian care.

SECTION XII.

The inexcusableness of indifferency in the things of religion.

I Have ever been out of love with a spirit of lukewarmness and indifferency in religious matters, but never so much as now. Detestable sluggishness! To trifle in the pursuit of any important object is inexcusable; but here it is inexpressibly criminal. What shall I do to shame my conscience with reproaches for my past inactivity? I see the ambitious and earthly-minded solicitous and restless to make themselves great in the world. What toils do they undergo, what unwearied pains do they take, to purchase the regard and veneration of their fellow-worms! What projects do they lay, and with what difficulty and unwearied labour do they accomplish their designs, whilst they are but in quest of gaudy toys! and shall I
trifle

trifle in the pursuit of celestial felicity and honor? ‘ Shall I loiter in the noble strife, ‘ when every moment’s toil will be recompenced with eternal ages of rest and triumph? See! see! the moments fly, the labour shortens, and the immense reward draws near! The palm of victory, the starry crown, are in view; the happy realms and fields of light entertain me with their glorious prospect. Rouse thee, my soul, to the most active pursuit of these felicities*!’ Waken all thy sprightly powers, and let it never be thy reproach to breathe the detested spirit of *Laodicean* lukewarmness. Indolence, in religious matters, is inexpressibly loathsome and offensive to the Lord Jesus Christ. And well it may. If Christianity be a real thing, it is the most excellent and important of all objects. How inexcusable, then, must it be, to treat it with indifference! How affronting to its divine Author, to pursue it with a divided heart?

* Mrs. Rowe’s Devout Exer. of the Heart.

Lukewarm water is offensive to the stomachs of men, and provokes a nausea; even so, the Lord Jesus is sick of lukewarm professors, and cannot long bear them. This temper is nauseous to him. * *Why, O ye triflers in religion! why halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God, follow him; if Baal, follow him.*

A wo is denounced on them *that are at ease in Zion*†. Insensibility and indifferency often steal upon the minds of God's dear saints, by imperceptible degrees. Too many seek their beloved Lord and Saviour, as on the bed of carnal ease and security: do we need to wonder, then, that they *find him not*? *Cant. iii. 1, 2, 3.* Let me ever imitate the *man after God's own heart*, in breathing heavenwards, repeatedly and incessantly, for *quickenning grace*‡. While many sit down in

* *Rev. iii. 16.*

† *Amos vi. 1.*

‡ *Pf. cxix. 25, 107, 154. Quicken me according to thy word. Ver. 37. Quicken thou me in thy way. Ver. 40. Quicken thou me in thy righteousness. Ver. 88, 159. Quicken me after thy loving kindness. Ver. 149, 156. Quicken me according to thy judgments.*

ease and indolence, and rest satisfied with present attainments, let celestial and unextinguished ardor ever fire my bosom, after more conformity to, and nearer communion with Jesus! Persuaded I am, there are further degrees of divine knowledge, faith, love and heavenly-mindedness, to be attained in the Christian life, than multitudes, who name the name of Christ, have any experience of. May I and all to whom I have the happiness to stand related in the ties of Christian friendship, be ever helped to express somewhat of the Spirit which so eminently fired the breast of the blessed apostle *Paul*! May we ever keep a humble sense of, and be dissatisfied with our present attainments! May we forget the progress already made, *the things that are behind*, and strain every nerve in *reaching forth to what is before us*! that *we may apprehend that, for which we are apprehended of Christ Jesus**. May the glorious prize of our high calling be displayed

* *Phil.* iii. 12, 13, 14.

before our believing eyes, that all the ardor of our souls may be awakened to come up to it, and lay hold upon it ! May we never sit down to sleep, never loiter by the way, or stoop to gather despicable pebbles, or strive to *load ourselves with thick clay* ! May we never slacken our pace, but daily increase our speed, in *running the race which is set before us*, till we arrive at the goal, and receive the crown of life !

How little do the bulk of those called Christians, of those, too, in whom we would hope the *root of the matter is found* ; how little do they witness of the power, or comforts, of Christianity ! And, which is still more to be lamented, how contentedly do they go on without aspiring after them ! Where shall we find that fervency of love and zeal, that liveliness and steadiness of faith, that deadness to the world, and those heavenly tempers, which enter so deeply into the essence of living Christianity ? In whom shall we find a steady, lively expectation of, and waiting for immortal blessedness ! How
few

few can we find *rejoicing in the hope of the glory of God*? Are there not many of Christ's professing people, who are not 'less afraid
 ' to go to prison than to go to their God;
 ' and had rather be banished into a land of
 ' strangers, than die*?' O, that we may be recovered from that lethargic indolence, which deadens our attention to the one thing needful!

Come holy Spirit, heavenly Dove,
 With all thy quick'ning pow'rs;
 Come shed abroad a Saviour's love,
 And that shall kindle ours.

* *Baxter's Dying Thoughts* abridged, p. 88.

SECTION XIII.

The hurtfulness of trifling contentions in religious matters.

IT was *Luther's* prayer, *that God would deliver his church from a vain-glorious teacher, a contentious pastor, and useless questions**. Have not we, in the present age, reason to say, *Amen*, to it? It has been said, Where controversy begins, religion often ends. And, though I am persuaded, this is not always the case, yet is it not certain, that when we deal much in disputes, especially about smaller matters, we hazard our own peace of mind, and endanger the temper of meekness and love? In some circumstances, Providence may call us *to contend earnestly for the faith, once delivered to the*

* A doctore glorioso, a pastore contentioso, & in utilibus quæstionibus libera ecclesiam Deus.

saints,

saints, against its common enemies; but a great many trifling disputes are carried on, by the professing followers of Jesus, which have not only been unedifying, but greatly prejudicial to the interests of religion in general, and particularly to the life and power of godliness in the soul.—Let us, then, follow after the things that make for peace, and things whereby one may edify another. Let brotherly love continue. The face of death, and the near prospects of eternity, will teach us the vanity of *striving about words to no profit*. It is the devil's device to draw off our attention from weightier matters. God is one, and dearly loves unity among his people. The curtains of the tabernacle were ordered to be coupled together, that *it might be one tabernacle*, *Exod. xxxvi. 13—18*. What should this signify, but the knitting and clasping together of the saints in love? In the primitive ages, the very enemies of God were struck with the mutual love that appeared in the followers of Jesus; and often cried out, *See how they love one another*

other, and are willing to die one for another!*

Whereas now, the opposers of powerful godliness warm themselves at the fire of our contentions, and say, *Aha! so would we have it.* O that we might all endeavour to speak the same things, and be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment! This would make us *Συμφύχοι*, men of *one heart and soul*, which is the most lovely and engaging sight in the world. *Acts* ii. 46, 47. It is a lively emblem of heaven. Let us *strive together* against the common foe, and his various stratagems: but let there be no strife *between us*, no opposition one to another, *because we are brethren*; children of the same Father, members of the same body, *partakers of like precious faith*, embarked on the same bottom, heirs of the same inheritance, and travelling to the same country†.

Partakers

* *Ecce quam mutuo se diligunt, et mori volunt pro alterutris!*

† It is said, that *Alexander Severus* finding two Christians contending with each other, commanded them,

Partakers of the Saviour's grace,
 The same in mind and heart ;
 Nor joy, nor grief, nor time, nor place,
 Nor life, nor death, shall part.

We all are one, who him receive,
 And each with each agree ;
 In him our root, our head we live,
 Blest point of unity !

Closer and closer let us cleave,
 To his belov'd embrace ;
 Expect his fulness to receive,
 And grace to answer grace.

them, that they should not take the name of Christ upon them any longer. For you greatly dishonor your Master, (said he) whose servants you profess yourselves to be. *Flavel.*

SECTION XIV.

The onsets of Satan.

WHEN God corrects and causes us to feel the smart of his rod, *Satan*, in the height of his malice, labours to cast his salt and vinegar into the wound. The busy enemy is ever wakeful and vigilant. When death approaches, he hath but one cast more for the game, one skirmish more to get, or lose, the victory for ever. In such circumstances, therefore, he is never wanting to try the power of his diabolical art, as far as the Almighty Sovereign shall permit him. As *Esau* waited for the days of mourning for his father, that he might execute his malicious purpose on *Jacob*, so it is here. Times of affliction are the days of mourning, in which *Satan* designs us the greatest mischief. He not only tempts and distresses, but often
accuses

accuses the poor, afflicted children of God. His name, *Satan*, denotes him to be an *adversary*, an *accuser*. He aggravates the sins of God's people, and calls aloud for vengeance ; crying, Down with them, down with them, even to the dust. He says, like *Pharaoh* of old, I will pursue them with malice and rage, I will tear them in pieces like a lion, my lust shall be satisfied upon them. Happy for us that the dear Redeemer cuts short his power, secures his chain in his own hand, *will not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able ; but with every temptation, will make a way for our escape, at present, and will bruise Satan under our feet shortly.*

The tempter, likewise, frequently comes in after great manifestations of divine love to the soul, whether in sickness or health. We can neither well bear the smiles, nor the frowns, of our heavenly Father, without a snare. We are in danger on both hands, and the subtil enemy spies his advantage. As

some vile impostor attacks a young, rich heir, when he is flush with money, and endeavours by a thousand arts to inveigle him out of it; even so *Satan* attacks the Christian when he has been on the mount of comfort. Christ had pronounced a blessing on *Peter*, for the confession he had made; the all-discerning Saviour presently perceived *Satan* standing at *Peter's* elbow *. The apostle *Paul* was transported *into the third heaven*, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter; but soon the messenger of *Satan* buffets him, which was to him as a thorn in his flesh †. This, as it is a proof of *Satan's* malice, so the permission of it is an instance of God's mercy, as is evident from the case just mentioned: it was suffered so to be, says the penetrating apostle, *lest I should be exalted above measure*. Take courage then, O my soul, the adversary, though subtil and furious, is under the

* *Matt.* xvi. 17, 23.

† *2 Cor.* xii. 1—9.

restraining hand of Omnipotence, and victory is sure on the Christian's side.

The sharpest conflicts e'er I bore,
 Sha'n't spoil my future peace ;
 For *Satan's* self can do no more
 Than what my Father please.

SECTION XV.

*The reality and importance of the religion of
 Jesus.*

UPON the whole, then, there is a *reality* in the religion of Jesus. Of this I have been long persuaded ; but the bright conviction never struck me so deeply till now.

‘ I thought so once, but now I know it.’

They who never felt the real influences of religion on their own souls, will not believe that others feel them. Serious piety, is a

ludicrous subject, with many. This is one of the cursed snares of *Satan*, by which he ruins thousands. They treat religion as if it were only a fancy, and the zeal of its professors as the intemperate heat of some crazy brains, or the effect of wild enthusiasm. This is just as the grand deceiver would have it. Dreadful delusion! fatal to the interests, and destructive to the immortal soul! A dying-bed would teach them otherwise. Were the vail of mortality now to drop, so long as my tongue could move, I would bear testimony with my dying breath, against the levity and atheism of the age. Living, powerful Christianity, is the greatest reality in the world.

And as it is a real thing, so ‘ it is the only
 ‘ thing that will stand us in stead in the hour
 ‘ of death. Neither wealth, nor power, nor
 ‘ greatness, nor friends, will be of any avail
 ‘ then. Men may despise it while they are
 ‘ in health and strength, and in the midst
 ‘ of affluence and pleasure: but where is
 ‘ the wretch that dares laugh at it in the im-
 , mediate

' mediate views of eternity?—Ah! no. They
 ' then think otherwise. Had they millions
 ' of worlds, they would part with them all,
 ' to obtain the comforts and hopes which are
 ' derived only from this source. How de-
 ' sirable then is an interest in Christ! He
 ' alone can save an immortal soul from the
 ' miseries of the second death, and give it
 ' an admission into the realms of light and
 ' glory above. O may this therefore be the
 ' grand object of our concern, and may every
 ' thing else be held in sovereign contempt,
 ' when compared with this the greatest
 ' good *.' I shall close these meditations
 with the following excellent poem, by Dr.
Watts.

* See Dr. Stennett's *Personal Religion*, vol. 2, page
 400, 8vo. edit. A work which it would be trifling in
 me to attempt to recommend. I am glad to see a se-
 cond edition of it in 12mo. at an easy price, and could
 wish every poor family might be furnished with it.
 Sold by *Buckland, Keith, &c.*

A fight

A sight of heaven in sickness.

I.

OFT have I sat in secret sighs,
To feel my flesh decay,
Then groan'd aloud with frightened eyes,
To view the tott'ring clay.

II.

But I forbid my sorrows now,
Nor dares the flesh complain;
Diseases bring their profit too;
The joy o'ercomes the pain.

III.

My chearful soul now all the day
Sits waiting here and sings;
Looks thro' the ruins of her clay,
And practises her wings.

IV.

Faith almost changes into fight,
While from afar she spies,
Her fair inheritance, in light
Above created skies.

V.

Had but the prison-walls been strong,
And firm without a flaw,
In darkness she had dwelt too long,
And less of glory saw.

VI.

But now the everlasting hills
Thro' every chink appear,
And something of the joy she feels
While she's a pris'ner here.

VII.

The shines of heaven rush sweetly in
At all the gaping flaws ;
Visions of endless bliss are seen,
And native air she draws.

O, may

[90]

VIII.

O, may these walls stand tott'ring still,
The breaches never close,
If I must here in darkness dwell,
And all this glory lose !

IX.

Or, rather, let this flesh decay,
The ruins wider grow,
Till, glad to see th' enlarged way,
I stretch my pinions through.

4 DECO

VII.

F I N I S.

